

The Gauls experienced the Roman Warm Period: Oxygen isotope study of the Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont, Picardie, France

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1	The Gauls experienced the Roman Warm Period: oxygen isotope study of
2	the Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont, Picardie, France
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21	
22	Abstract (190 words)
23	The Roman Warm Period (from \approx 300 BCE to \approx 300 AD) is a climatic optimum, which had a
24	key role in the development of the Roman civilization. This study provides new Mean Air
25	Temperatures (MATs) inferred from the oxygen isotope composition of 80 bones and teeth
26	apatite from 8 humans and 8 animals of the Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont, Picardie, France,
27	dated between the 3 rd and 2 nd century BCE. Various bones from the cephalic, axial and

appendicular skeleton of three human individuals were sampled. All bones have similar 28 phosphate δ^{18} O values for each individual, showing that the oxygen isotope signal of 29 phosphate groups may be homogeneously recorded in bones. The sampled individuals were 30 31 assumed to drink water from the nearby Avre river collecting local meteoric waters. The MATs were reconstructed combining (1) oxygen isotope fractionation equations between 32 phosphatic tissues ($\delta^{18}O_p$) and drinking water ($\delta^{18}O_w$), and (2) relationships between MATs 33 and $\delta^{18}O_w$. Depending on the used MAT- $\delta^{18}O_w$ relationship, the reconstructed MATs are 34 10.2°C±1.4°C and 10.5°C±1.7°C, which are comparable to present days (10.9°C). This study 35 shows that the Gallic civilization also experienced relatively high temperatures since the 36 initiation of the Roman Warm Period. 37

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39 <u>Keywords:</u> oxygen isotopes; human skeleton; climate; Gauls, Roman Warm Period

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41 **1. Introduction**

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43 Although the Holocene is considered to be a very stable interglacial period, climatic variations from the centennial- to millennial-scale have been identified (Holzhauser et al., 44 2005; Caroli and Caldara, 2007; Lirer et al., 2014; Luterbacher et al., 2016; Cisneros et al., 45 46 2016). These variations are considered to be key elements in the rise and fall of civilizations. 47 For instance, the Medieval Warm Period witnessed the development of rural populations in Europe linked to very productive harvests. Cities developed and major cultural innovations 48 49 took place during warm periods due to land shortages and increasing food requirements (Fagan, 2008). On the other hand, at the end of the Late Bronze Age, most eastern 50 51 Mediterranean urban centers were either destroyed or abandoned throughout the Middle East and the Aegean area. Some authors have recently suggested that a centuries-long 52

megadrought caused the widespread collapse of Bronze Age Palatial civilization (Kaniewski
et al., 2010; Drake, 2012). The Roman Warm Period (RWP), also called the Roman Climatic
Optimum or the Roman Humid Period, is a climatic variation of interest clearly identified in
the European record. The RWP is identified as a key period for the development of the
Roman culture all around the Mediterranean basin.

The concept of the RWP in Europe was first evoked by Lamb (1995) who provided a 58 59 synthesis of archaeological, glaciological and palynological studies. The temporal definition 60 of the RWP varies from one study to another, which may be due to the diversity of climate proxies and records in Europe. On average, its period extends between ≈300 BCE and ≈300 61 62 AD. The most direct proxies of the RWP are archaeological testimonies. Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) testifies that, contrary to what had been the custom in earlier centuries, vines and 63 64 olive trees were cultivated farther north in Italy. Ptolemy of Alexandria (100-168 AD) noticed that, around 140 AD, it rained every month of the year except August. McCormick et al. 65 (2012) developed an online database referencing archaeological evidence of climate 66 67 conditions during the Roman Period.

Although the RWP has been intensively studied in the European record, its climate
characteristics remain unclear. Most of the studies of continental western Europe (essentially
Spain, France and Italy) suggest a warm (e.g. McDermott et al., 2001; Roberts et al., 2001;
Desprat et al., 2003; Holzhauser et al., 2005; Frisia et al., 2005; Berger and Bravard, 2012;
Esper et al., 2012) and humid (e.g. Nesje et al., 2000; Wick et al., 2003; Ferrio et al., 2006;
Magny et al., 2007; Migowski et al., 2006; Zanchetta et al., 2007) climatic episode.

All the studies reconstructing the level of the Dead Sea also suggest a humid episode (Frumkin et al., 1991; Heim et al., 1997; Bookman et al., 2004; Migowski et al., 2006). The data coming from coastal and marine sediments from all over the Mediterranean basin highlight a dry climate prevailing during the RWP (Schilman et al., 2001; Marquer et al.,

2008; Piva et al., 2008; Combourieu Nebout et al., 2009). This conflicts with the data coming
from continental Europe presented above, and suggests that the Mediterranean basin was
under the influence of a distinct climate regime during this episode.

High latitude records show a rather cold episode as documented in Iceland (Dahl-Jensen et al., 1998; Seidenkrantz et al., 2007). There are some records of a cold climate period in mid-latitudes, either in continental (Issar and Yakir, 1997; Baier et al., 2004; Mangini et al., 2005; Büntgen et al., 2011) or oceanic (Bond et al., 2001; Taricco et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2012; Lirer et al., 2014) environments. These temperature discrepancies may be explained by the existence of three cold and dry intervals during the RWP, which are named Roman I to III (Lirer et al., 2014; Margaritelli et al., 2016).

Variations of solar irradiance are currently invoked to explain the RWP (Bond et al., 88 2001; Jiang et al., 2005; Mangini et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2012). Some studies highlight 89 90 correlations between solar activity variations and oceanic (Taricco et al., 2009; Lirer et al., 91 2014) or continental (Mangini et al., 2005; Margaritelli et al., 2016) records, suggesting that 92 variations in solar activity may be the main mechanism responsible for the RWP. Dermody et 93 al. (2012) have presented a model of a climatic "see-saw" between western/coastal Europe and Mediterranean/Eastern Europe, where solar activity variations trigger a change in the 94 95 position and intensity of jet streams through thermal variations of the North Atlantic Ocean. 96 However, these interpretations must be taken with caution, as the role of solar activity as a 97 driver for climate variations is questionable and has been challenged in the last decades (e.g. Csiro, 1983; Haigh, 2007; Lockwood, 2012; Oldenborgh et al., 2013). 98

All the presented records suffer from significant dating uncertainties and, for most of them, are not focused on the RWP. No climatic reconstruction coming from human or animal bones is available so far for this period. This study aims to present stable isotope proxy records of Mean Air Temperature (MAT) inferred from vertebrate remains. Samples have

been collected from an archaeological site, well constrained in space and time, which is 103 located in the North of France where an especially important lack of data has been noticed. 104 105 The studied population belongs to the Gallic civilization. The Gauls, who came from Celtic populations, occupied most of Western Europe during the Iron Age (800 BCE - 50 BCE). 106 Between the 2nd and 1st century BCE, the Roman Empire was involved in territorial conquests 107 108 from minor Asia through Northern Africa and Greece to Western Europe, which includes 109 Gallic territories. Therefore, the study of Gallic archaeological sites may bring information 110 dealing with the transition from the Iron Age Cold Epoch and the RWP or the first part of the 111 RWP, until ≈0 AD when all populations are expected to have been under the control of the 112 Roman Empire.

113 The climate characteristics of the RWP can be studied at mid-to-low latitudes using the 114 oxygen isotope composition of meteoric waters ($\delta^{18}O_{mw}$), which strongly depends on air 115 temperature, humidity, the trajectories of humid air masses and the amount of precipitation 116 (Dansgaard, 1964). Reconstructing the past $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ variations of meteoric waters permits an 117 estimation of the past variations of those climate parameters.

It is known that the oxygen isotope composition of phosphate group ($\delta^{18}O_p$) from 118 119 mineralized tissues of mammalian individuals (bones, teeth) is related to the oxygen isotope composition of drinking water ($\delta^{18}O_w$) (Longinelli, 1984; Luz et al., 1984; Luz and Kolodny, 120 121 1985; Kohn, 1996). During pre-industrial times, most of the consumed water came from local 122 sources (wells, springs, nearby watercourses), which are derived from local meteoric waters (Daux et al., 2005; Darling, 2006). The contribution of water from food varies from one 123 124 species to another, according to the water-turnover of the animal (Kohn, 1996). Water 125 turnover scales to body-mass for most terrestrial vertebrates (Eberhardt, 1969). Humans are 126 medium omnivores with moderate water turnover, around 5 to 10% of total body water per day (Shimamoto and Komiya, 2000), which means that the δ^{18} O of water ingested is strongly 127

128	and mainly imprinted by the $\delta^{18}\!O$ of drinking water. The cooking operation of brewing or
129	stewing may lead to an isotopic enrichment of the water contained in food compared to
130	meteoric water (Brettell et al., 2012), but its effect is not unanimous (e.g. Daux et al., 2008).
131	Therefore, measuring the oxygen isotope composition of phosphatic tissues from
132	terrestrial mammalians allows the $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ of contemporary meteoric waters to be calculated,
133	hence climate parameters such as MAT to be quantified. We demonstrate in this study that the
134	reconstructed MATs at Thézy-Glimont were similar to those of today.
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136	2. Material and methods
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138	2.1. The Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont
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141	The Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont is located in the Valley of the Somme, in the region of Picardie, France, 15 km southeast from the city of Amiens. (Figure 1). The site was excavated
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142 143	Picardie, France, 15 km southeast from the city of Amiens. (Figure 1). The site was excavated in the context of rescue archaeology by the Service d'Archéologie Préventive Amiens Métropole (SAAM) between November 2012 and May 2013 (Le Béchennec et al., 2016).
142 143 144	 Picardie, France, 15 km southeast from the city of Amiens. (Figure 1). The site was excavated in the context of rescue archaeology by the Service d'Archéologie Préventive Amiens Métropole (SAAM) between November 2012 and May 2013 (Le Béchennec et al., 2016). Picardie is located at mid-latitude (49°N-50°N) in the northwest of Europe, climatically

small seasonality amplitude of ±5.4°C throughout the years 1980 to 2010 (data from Météo
FranceTM). The yearly precipitation rate is 631 mm, with a small seasonality amplitude of

150 \pm 7 mm, July and December being the two most humid months.

Thézy-Glimont (49°48'N – 2°25'E) is located at the bottom of the Avre Valley, which
is a tributary of the Somme river. The Avre river is assumed to have been the drinking water

source of the inhabitants of Thézy-Glimont as it is located on the edge of the archaeologicalsite and no water wells have been observed.

155 The SAAM highlighted 17 rectangular graves during the excavation. The graves contain 156 horses (Equus caballus), bovids (Bos taurus) and a human (Homo sapiens) for most of them. 157 Sometimes a pig (Sus scrofa) has been found. All deposits seem to be intentional and 158 organized. They were filled with the same sediment (white chalk) coming from the digging, 159 whereas the tradition of Gallic funeral practices is usually cremation. The excavation report 160 chooses to present the graves as "offering graves", even if their true nature is not fully 161 understood (Le Béchennec et al., 2016). A total of 8 human, 12 horse, 39 bovid and 3 pig 162 skeletons were excavated from the 17 graves.

All 8 humans, 2 horses, 5 bovids and 1 pig were sampled from this corpus (see Table 1). A great number of sampled individuals come from TGV 1135 as it was the first grave to be excavated, the biggest of the archaeological site and the one with the highest number of individuals. The humans are all young males without any noticeable disease. The human identified as sample TG-02 is the youngest, around 15 years old, while TG-05 is the oldest (between 30 and 59 years old). The forensic expertise suggested a quick burying after death before the rigor mortis happened. Although the

170 Eighty samples (bones and teeth) were collected (Table 1). Bone samples were collected using a toothless diamond saw blade fitted to a DremelTM drill. Various elements coming 171 172 from the axial, cephalic and appendicular skeletons of TG-01, TG-02 and TG-03 were 173 sampled along with 19 bones for TG-01, 14 for TG-02 and 19 for TG-03, respectively (Figure 174 2). The bone samples were first abraded using a surgical knife in order to remove the altered 175 layer at the surface and grossly crushed using a hammer. All samples were washed with acetone to degrease them, rinsed three times with UltrapureTM water and dried in an oven 176 under medium vacuum, at 60°C, for 24 hours. Clean samples were then crushed in fine 177

powder using a Pulverisette 7TM planetary ball mill composed of zirconium oxide. Teeth were
extracted from the skulls by gently pulling them from their sockets. They were rinsed with
UltrapureTM water and cleaned using a toothbrush. The powder was obtained by drilling the
enamel of the teeth with a DremelTM diamond-head drill bit.

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2.2. Dating of the archaeological site

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During the excavation of the archaeological site, Beta AnalyticsTM realized ¹⁴C datings on 13 samples, giving dates with 68.3% probability (1 σ) between 200 BCE and 5 AD. New ¹⁴C dates were realized on collagen extracted from 7 human, 2 horse and 1 bovid bones. The protocol of the extraction of soluble collagen was based on the method described by Longin (1971) and has been previously described in detail by Richardin et al. (2017).

190 All measurements were performed with Accelerator Mass Spectrometry techniques 191 from the Artemis AMS facility at Saclay (France) (Moreau et al., 2013). Calendar dates were 192 determined using the OxCal v.4.2 procedure and the most recent calibration curve data for the 193 Northern Hemisphere, IntCal13 (Reimer et al., 2013). Calibration of radiocarbon ages was 194 performed considering that the contribution of marine products to the diet of the Gauls 195 remained marginal. Calibrated date ranges (Table 1) correspond to 95.4% probability (2σ) . The archaeological site is dated with 95.4% certainty between 350 BCE and 60 BCE with the 196 197 highest probability being between 350 BCE and 200 BCE, one century earlier than previously proposed. There are no obvious differences among and between the humans and the animals, 198 199 therefore all the graves seem contemporary, their digging possibly spread over a century.

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201

2.3. Bone turnover and isotope homogeneity

The bone tissue is vascularized, composed at 60 to 70% of hydroxyapatite crystals 203 204 tightly inter-grown with an organic matrix predominantly composed of type I collagen for 20 205 to 30%. Several ion substitutions can be observed in the crystalline matrix (LeGeros, 1981; 206 Wopenka and Pasteris, 2005). Enamel from teeth has much larger bioapatite crystals and a 207 very low organic content, which makes it less sensitive to diagenesis (Tütken and 208 Vennemann, 2011). Bone and tooth formation starts in the embryo, but human teeth complete 209 accretion long before bone growth has finished. The human permanent dentition is expected 210 to be fully formed at about 12 years, while a complete bone structure can be achieved at the 211 age of 20. Tooth enamel and dentine grow by accretion and do not renew afterwards. On the 212 contrary, there is a set-up of re-absorption of old bone (both organic and inorganic matrix) 213 and deposition of new bone tissue. At maturity, this mechanism happens to be continuous and 214 the bone is said to "turnover". For a young adult, the total bone tissue is expected to turnover 215 every five to six years, although it may depend on the bone region or the individual health 216 status (Glimcher, 2006). Therefore, the stable isotope composition of the bone tissue only 217 represents the last 5 to 10 years of the individual life, while that of a tooth will represent the 218 first 12 years of life. Some studies use the discrepancy of bone turnover to highlight a change 219 of the diet (e.g. Lamb et al., 2014).

220 Because of poor conservation of the material in the field, the lack of articulations 221 between bones or the preciosity of samples, most isotope studies on bone material are realized 222 on one bone (generally the femur or the rib) and assume the value is representative of the 223 whole individual characteristics (e.g. Prowse et al., 2004; Jay and Richards, 2006). However, 224 if bone turnover is highly variable at the intra- and inter-individual scale, we can wonder to 225 what extent the isotope study of one bone is representative of the whole skeleton? To 226 investigate this issue, several parts (bones and teeth) of the same skeleton have been sampled 227 from the three best conserved and most complete skeletons of human individuals (TG-01, TG- 02 and TG-03) excavated in Thézy-Glimont (see Figure 2). Intra-comparisons of the oxygen
isotope composition of mineralized tissues were realized for each individual.

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231 2.4. Oxygen isotope ratios of apatite phosphate

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Oxygen isotopic analyses were performed with stable isotope mass spectrometry 233 234 techniques. Phosphate ions were extracted from the apatite using a wet chemistry procedure. 235 After the dissolution of about 30 mg of each sample in 2 mL of 2M HF at ambient 236 temperature for 24 hours, the CaF_2 precipitate was separated from the sample solution by 237 centrifugation. The phosphate ions were neutralized with KOH and isolated using a strong 238 anionic resin (Amberlite IRN 78) before being precipitated as silver phosphate following the method first described by Crowson et al. (1991) and slightly modified by Lécuyer et al. 239 240 (1993). The oxygen isotope data were obtained using a high-temperature pyrolysis continuous flow technique developed by Lécuyer et al. (2007) and Fourel et al. (2011). For each sample, 241 242 five aliquots of 400–500 µg of silver phosphate were mixed with 500 µg of carbon loaded into 3.5x5 mm silver foil isotope grade capsules (EurovectorTM). Pyrolysis was performed at 243 244 1450°C using a PYROcube[™] elemental analyzer (Elementar GmbH-Germany) interfaced in 245 continuous flow mode with an isotopic ratio mass spectrometer IsoprimeTM (Elementar UK 246 Ltd UK). Measurements were performed with CO gas separated by purge and trap technology within the PYROcubeTM system at the Laboratoire de Géologie de Lyon and at the 247 248 Laboratoire d'Ecologie des Hydrosystèmes Naturels et Anthropisés, both hosted by the 249 Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1. The official unit for isotopic ratios is the Urey (Ur), 250 although the unit commonly used is the permil (%, 1% = 1mUr). For practical reasons, data are reported as δ^{18} O values with respect to V-SMOW in ‰ units. 251

252	Oxygen isotope compositions were drift corrected to account for instrumental
253	variations. Results were calibrated against silver phosphate samples of known $\delta^{18}O$ values
254	precipitated from the NBS120c standard for which the δ^{18} O value was fixed at 21.7‰ (V-
255	SMOW) (Lécuyer et al., 1993; Chenery et al., 2010; Halas et al., 2011), as well as with
256	NBS127 (barium sulfate) having a certified value of 9.3‰ (V-SMOW) (Hut, 1987). NBS120c
257	standards were converted into silver phosphate along with the samples from each chemistry
258	batch and considered as "internal standards". They have δ^{18} O values that range from 21.4‰
259	to 22.2‰ with a mean value of 21.76±0.25‰ ($n=12$). The analytical uncertainty for samples
260	is always lower than 0.3% (2 σ).
261	
262	3. Results
263	
264	3.1. Intra-skeletal variability of the $\delta^{18}O_p$ from human bones
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266	The intra-skeletal variability of the $\delta^{18}O_p$ values from the three human individuals
267	TG-01, TG-02, TG-03 range from 16.1‰ to 16.9‰ with a mean value of 16.6‰ for TG-01,
268	from 17.4‰ to 17.9‰ with a mean value of 17.6‰ for TG-02 and from 16.4‰ to 17.3‰
269	with a mean value of 16.8‰ for TG-03 (Figure 2). The standard deviation, representing the
270	intra-skeletal variability of oxygen isotope composition, is respectively 0.2‰, 0.2‰ and
271	0.3‰ for TG-01, TG-02 and TG-03. Local deviations of bones $\delta^{18}O_p$ from the average
272	skeleton $\delta^{18}O_p$ value has been calculated for each individual as follows:
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 $\delta^{18}O^{bone}_{skeleton}(\%_0) = \delta^{18}O^{bone}_{V-SMOW} + \delta^{18}O^{V-SMOW}_{skeleton} + \delta^{18}O^{bone}_{V-SMOW} \times \delta^{18}O^{V-SMOW}_{skeleton} \times 10^{-3}$

No localized and repeatable enrichment or depletion in ¹⁸O relative to the average $\delta^{18}O_p$ value is observed among the three individuals.

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278 *3.2. Oxygen isotope values of phosphatic tissues*

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280 The oxygen isotope compositions of apatite phosphate from the 80 samples were analyzed (Figure 3, Supplementary Table 1). The $\delta^{18}O_p$ values of human bones and teeth 281 range from 15.1% to 18.0%. Teeth are systematically enriched in ¹⁸O relative to bones by 282 283 respectively 0.9‰, 0.3‰ and 0.9‰ for TG-01, TG-02 and TG-03. Human bones have a mean $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of 16.2‰ with a standard deviation of 0.8‰. TG-02, who is the youngest 284 analyzed individual, is significantly enriched by 1.3% compared to the other humans. The 285 286 analyzed pig has a mean $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of 15.6% with a standard deviation of 0.5%. The bones from 5 bovids have a mean $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of 17.3‰ with a standard deviation of 0.2‰, while 287 288 the two teeth from individuals TG-B4 and TG-B5 have a mean value of 16.1‰ and a standard deviation of 0.1‰. Teeth are significantly depleted in ¹⁸O by 1.3‰ relative to bones. No 289 significant isotopic difference is observed relative to sex (TG-B1 versus the others) or to the 290 291 grave the individuals were buried in (TG-B5 versus the others). Molars from the two horses 292 have a mean value of 15.8‰ with a standard deviation of 0.6‰. In the case of the horse TG-CH1, the bone $\delta^{18}O_p$ value is 1.4% higher than that of the tooth. The bones of herbivores 293 (horse, bovid) have a mean $\delta^{18}O_p$ of 17.5‰, while the average $\delta^{18}O_p$ for omnivores (human, 294 pig) is 15.9‰. 295

296

4. Discussion

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299 *4.1.* Sample preservation and diagenesis

The bones from Thézy-Glimont showed a visible brownish layer of alteration, which was removed using a surgical knife. Some of the human teeth showed attrition, which is a common feature for the gallic civilization. It may be due to the habit of eating gritter bread containing sediment particles. Attrition may have altered mechanically the teeth without scrambling the isotopic signal recorded in enamel.

306 In apatite, P-O bond is known to be very resistant to inorganic isotope exchange with 307 aqueous fluids at surface temperatures (e.g. Blake et al., 1997; Lécuyer et al., 1999). No trace of microbially induced diagenesis has been detected. An expected offset of the $\delta^{18}O_{p}$ signal 308 between teeth and bones from the same individual has been noticed (Touzeau et al., 2013; 309 Martin et al., 2017). All three individuals TG-01, TG-02 and TG-03 have very low $\delta^{18}O_p$ 310 intra-skeletal variability (Figure 2). When considering all the measurements from each 311 312 skeleton the three standard deviations of 0.2‰, 0.2‰ and 0.3‰, respectively, are in the same 313 order of magnitude as the analytical uncertainty $(\pm 0.3\%)$. No noticeable and localized isotopic enrichment or depletion relative to the average $\delta^{18}O_p$ value has been noticed. All 314 315 these observations support the hypothesis of the preservation of the pristine oxygen isotope 316 compositions of phosphatic tissues.

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318 4.2. Homogeneity of oxygen isotope values in human skeleton apatite phosphate

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The mapping of the oxygen isotope composition of human bone apatite at the skeletal level of observation (Figure 2) revealed that, in the case of $\delta^{18}O_p$ values, the study of one selected bone is representative of the composition of the whole individual. We observe an isotopic homogeneity at the skeleton scale, although the bones have various turnover rates. Two complementary explanations are proposed: TG-01, TG-02 and TG-03 being young, they

might have only realized one cycle of bone turnover at most and their diet did not change 325 during this interval of time. As migrations can be recorded by apatite $\delta^{18}O_p$ values (e.g. 326 327 Lightfoot and O'Connell, 2016), we also propose that they were sedentary and lived all their 328 life in Picardie, France, which could be confirmed with supplementary analysis such as the 329 use of strontium isotopes. The oxygen isotope variability inside a bone has not been 330 investigated, but the epiphysis of some bones (e.g. the humerus) and the diaphysis of others 331 (e.g. the tibia) were analyzed and no noticeable offset was detected. With caution, following 332 studies of the oxygen isotope composition of bones in archaeological sedentary populations may assume that one bone is representative of the whole individual. The $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of 333 vertebrates is also dependent on body temperature (Kohn, 1996) and has been used to study 334 335 the thermophysiology of terrestrial (Barrick and Showers, 1994, 1995; Amiot et al., 2006) and 336 marine vertebrates (Bernard et al., 2010; Séon et al., 2020). Thermal variations (or regional 337 heterothermy), which exist at a human body scale, are not documented at the light of our 338 study of the oxygen isotope ratios of phosphatic tissues.

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- 340

4.3. The $\delta^{18}O_p$ record in teeth and bones from individuals of Thézy-Glimont

341

There is a very low $\delta^{18}O_p$ variability observed between humans and animals from 342 Thézy-Glimont. The $\delta^{18}O_p$ values from herbivore bones are on average 1.7% higher than 343 344 those from omnivorous individuals. This can be explained by the diet of the herbivores mainly eating grass and leaves containing water which is ¹⁸O-enriched in relation to the plant 345 346 evaporative system (Barbour, 2007). Comparing the oxygen isotope value from herbivores 347 and omnivores (mainly humans) enables to address the question of the influence of food processing on $\delta^{18}O_p$. Although no information is available about the dietary practices on this 348 349 archaeological site, stewing or brewing may be detected through an isotopic enrichment of body water later translated in a higher $\delta^{18}O_p$ of human bones compared to herbivores (Brettell et al., 2012). This effect is not detected in this study, which leads to two possible conclusions: either the inhabitants of Thézy-Glimont had dietary practices which did not include brewing or stewing, or these cooking processes are not detected in the oxygen isotope composition of bone apatite. This latter conclusion agrees the works of Daux et al., (2008) on modern human teeth samples and Chesson et al. (2010) on the similarity of oxygen isotope values of different modern beverages and meteoric waters in a same location.

The $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of human teeth enamel is higher than the $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of bones, 357 especially for TG-01 (+0.9‰) and TG-03 (+0.9‰). These values are comparable to the offset 358 359 between infant and adult bones of $\approx +1.2\%$ found by Britton et al. (2015) which can be 360 attributed to a specific diet during childhood. A large part of the child's diet consists of milk, which is ¹⁸O-enriched from the mother's body water. The second and third molars, 361 362 respectively M2 and M3, are considered post-weaning teeth and do not record any breastfeeding. Although the M3 is not discernable from the oxygen isotope value of bones from 363 TG-02 and is ¹⁸O-depleted compared to the two other teeth for TG-03, the M2 has similar 364 values than pre-weaning teeth (M1 for TG-01 and PM1 for TG-03). On the contrary, 365 herbivore teeth are depleted in ¹⁸O compared to bones: -1.3‰ for bovids and -1.4‰ for the 366 367 horse TG-CH1. Herbivore hypsodont teeth, which grow continuously and are often used to study climate seasonality (e.g. Bernard et al., 2009), record a signal which is more limited in 368 369 time than bones. For the last decade, the average interannual change in yearly MAT of Picardie, France, is $\pm 1^{\circ}$ C (data from historique-meteo.net) and can go as high as $2 - 2.5^{\circ}$ C 370 (for instance between 2013 and 2014). Translated into δ^{18} O of local meteoric waters, this 371 372 interannual change is $\pm 0.6\%$ on average and can go as far as a $\pm 1.6\%$, which is in the range 373 of the teeth-bones offset noticed for the herbivores. We propose that herbivore teeth recorded more time-limited interval and colder climatic conditions, hence presenting an offset from the 374

bones δ^{18} O record, which represents a pluriannual time scale. Bones are a better material to reconstruct MAT on the pluriannual time scale than teeth which record either a drinking water environmental signal mixed with breastfeeding in the case of humans or a time-limited signal in the case of herbivores. Therefore, only the oxygen isotope values coming from bones are considered for the calculation of δ^{18} O_w of drinking water and MATs reconstruction.

TG-02 is ¹⁸O-enriched compared to all the other humans and there is no significant difference between the $\delta^{18}O_p$ of his bones and his teeth (see Figure 3). This isotopic offset can be attributed to his young age (estimated at 15 years) keeping in mind that the set-up of bone turnover is only achieved around 20 years-old. The bones from TG-02 might still record a residual signal from the breast-feeding period, mixed with a signal coming from drinking water. Therefore, this individual was removed from the reconstruction of the $\delta^{18}O$ of environmental drinking water.

The oxygen isotope composition of phosphatic tissues from individuals with a medium 387 to low water turnover is mostly representative of the δ^{18} O of the drinking water. Thézy-388 Glimont is located in a valley bottom, a few meters away from the Avre river, which is 389 assumed to be the main drinking water source of local inhabitants. The $\delta^{18}O_p$ record is, 390 391 therefore, representative of the climate parameters linked to the Avre river. The relationship between the $\delta^{18}O_p$ of phosphatic tissues and the $\delta^{18}O_w$ of drinking water has been determined 392 393 empirically in numerous groups of vertebrates. These oxygen isotope fractionation equations 394 mainly depend on the basal metabolism, body mass and diet (herbivorous vs. carnivorous vs. 395 omnivorous) of species. Several equations have been used in this study and are represented in Figure 4 as follows: 396

397

398 Daux et al. (2008) for humans:

$$\delta^{18}O_w(\pm 1.51\%) = 1.54 \times \delta^{18}O_p - 33.72$$

401 Longinelli (1984) for pigs:

402

 $\delta^{18}O_w = \frac{\delta^{18}O_p - 22.71}{0.86}$

403

405

 $\delta^{18}O_w = \frac{\delta^{18}O_p - 24.90}{1.01}$

406

407 Bryant et al. (1994) for equids:

408

$$\delta^{18}O_w(\pm 2.46\%_0) = \frac{\delta^{18}O_p - 22.90}{0.6863}$$

409

The errors associated with the linear regression of empirical data (y = mx + b) have been computed as the mean standard error for the "y" value when not available in the original publication and are $\pm 0.2\%$ for the equation of Longinelli (1984) and $\pm 0.1\%$ for the equation of D'Angela and Longinelli (1990). We highlight that these uncertainties may be underestimated as both of the isotope fractionation equations have been established with a very low number of data, respectively 7 average δ^{18} O values for Longinelli (1984) and 5 average δ^{18} O values for D'Angela and Longinelli (1990).

417 Using these equations, $\delta^{18}O_p$ were converted into $\delta^{18}O_w$ values (Figure 4, 418 Supplementary Table 2), which were interpreted as reflecting the oxygen isotope composition 419 of the Avre river during the 2nd to 3rd century BCE. The mean $\delta^{18}O_w$ inferred from humans and animals is -8.4‰, with a standard deviation of $\pm 1\%$. The propagation of uncertainty, represented as error bars in Figure 4, have been calculated as the quadratic sum of the analytical uncertainty, errors associated with the equations and variability in the case of several measurements obtained for a single individual (TG-01, TG-02, TG-03 and TG-C1). Taking into account these uncertainties, all the $\delta^{18}O_w$ values are homogenous and we can affirm that they represent one main water source.

426 The present-day isotopic composition of the Avre river water was measured by Négrel and Petelet-Giraud (2005) twice in a year (Avril and October 2001), with respective $\delta^{18}O_w$ 427 values of -6.86‰ and -7.00‰. The δ^2 H and δ^{18} O values of the Avre river match the Global 428 429 Meteoric Water Line (Craig, 1961) as well as the Brest-Orléans isotopic rainwater domain, 430 confirming that the signal from the Avre river reflects the composition of local meteoric 431 waters. The oxygen isotope composition of meteoric waters is dependent on temperature, rate 432 of precipitation and the trajectory of humid air masses (Craig and Gordon, 1965; Rozanski et al., 1993; Gat, 1996). During the last two millennia, the climatic moisture delivered through 433 434 Europe has been driven by the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) (Smith et al., 2016) and it is 435 reasonable to consider that there has not been any major change in the balance between the 436 water cycle reservoirs for this interval of time (Darling, 2006). For mid- to high-latitudes, rough linear correlations are observed between the δ^{18} O of meteoric water and air temperature 437 438 (e.g. Dansgaard, 1964; Rozanski et al., 1992; Fricke and O'Neil, 1999). Such correlations 439 result from isotopic compositions that obey a Rayleigh distillation law in both evolving 440 reservoirs of vapor water and condensed water. Condensation in clouds globally proceeds 441 from warm low latitudes toward cold high latitudes. Air temperature in the residual clouds 442 tends to decrease resulting in an increasing isotopic difference between precipitation and 443 water vapor.

For Europe, the slope between $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ and Mean Air Temperature (MAT) is considered 444 to be 0.58% per °C (Rozanski et al., 1992). We combine the $\delta^{18}O_w$ (now assumed to be local 445 $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$) obtained from measurements performed on individuals from Thézy-Glimont to 446 relationships between $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ and MATs. Several relationships (Dansgaard, 1964; Rozanski 447 448 et al., 1992; Fricke and O'Neil, 1999; von Grafenstein et al., 1996; Lécuyer, 2013) are 449 available in the literature. These different equations may provide sizeable differences in the 450 calculated air temperature (Daux et al., 2005). We chose two equations we considered the 451 most appropriate in the framework of this study. First, the equation provided by von 452 Grafenstein et al. (1996), which has been established at Lake Ammersee, Bavaria, Germany (48°00'N - 11°07'E), only located $\approx 2^{\circ}$ of latitude south of Thézy-Glimont. The equation is 453 expressed as follows: 454

455

$$MAT (^{\circ}C) = \frac{\delta^{18}O_{mw} + 14.48}{0.58 (\pm 0.11)}$$
(1)

456

457 Secondly, we also considered the isotope fractionation equation established by Lécuyer 458 (2013) as it has been constructed from European meteorological stations excluding those from 459 the Mediterranean basin, which is under the influence of a specific climatic mode (Lécuyer et 460 al., 2018). The equation is expressed as follows:

461

462
$$MAT (^{\circ}C) = 1.41 (\pm 0.09) \times \delta^{18}O_{mw} + 22.02 (\pm 0.83)$$
 (2)

463

A reconstruction of mean annual δ¹⁸O_{mw} value at the location of Thézy-Glimont (49°N,
2°E) using The Online Isotopes in Precipitation Calculator (Bowen and Revenaugh, 2003;
IAEA/WMO, 2015; Bowen, 2020) gives a value of -6.7±0.2‰, which is very close to the

April (-6.86‰) and October (-7.00‰) $\delta^{18}O_w$ values measured on the Avre river by Négrel 467 468 and Petelet-Giraud, (2005). We emphasize that at mid latitudes, sinusoidal-like seasonality in meteoric water $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ values mathematically leads to spring and autumn $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ values 469 470 matching the mean annual one. Therefore, we use these inter-season oxygen isotope values to test both $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ -MAT equations for the Picardie region. The calculated temperatures are 471 13.1±1.6°C and 12.3±1.6°C in April and 12.9±1.6°C and 12.1±1.6°C in October for equations 472 473 (1) and (2), respectively. The isotope data from April 2001 may be biased as floods happened in the Somme department during this month, which led to an ¹⁸O enrichment of the Avre river 474 water sampled for the study. As far as October data are concerned, the calculated 475 476 temperatures are near the average temperature of 11.6°C for this month (data from Météo FranceTM). Those results indicate that both equations are reliable to infer MAT from $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ 477 478 and could safely be applied to the late Iron Age.

When applying equations (1) and (2) to the calculated $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$, the reconstituted air 479 temperatures for the late Iron Age are on average 10.5°C±1.7°C for equation (1) and 480 481 10.2°C±1.4°C for equation (2) (Figure 5). Therefore, the results for both of these equations being very close, those calculated MATs are ascribed to Thézy-Glimont during the 3rd to 2nd 482 century BCE. These calculated MAT well compare the present-day average temperature of 483 484 10.9°C recorded in Amiens, Picardie. Our result implies that mid-latitudes also experienced a climate optimum that can be attributed to the RWP, with continental temperatures close to 485 present-days. This MAT is consistent with results obtained from other studies realized at 486 487 mid-latitudes, such as palynological data from Tinner et al. (2003), sedimentological data from Holzhauser et al. (2005) and geochemical data obtained from speleothems by 488 489 McDermott et al. (2001).

We assign such mild air temperatures to what is considered to be the initiation of theRWP. The timing of the RWP is still unsure as well as its climatic characteristics. There may

always remain some discrepancies in the European temperature record for the RWP because
no global coherent warm period has occurred on Earth (Neukom et al., 2019) excluding the
current climate change. Nonetheless, this study provides a new climatic anchor point which is
well constrained in space and time, in a region lacking climatic data for the RWP.

496

497 **5.** Conclusion

498

The Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont provides an insight into the climatic conditions occurring during the 3rd to 2nd century BCE in the North Gaul. An oxygen isotope mapping of three human skeletons revealed a great homogeneity of $\delta^{18}O_p$ values within the range of analytical uncertainty. This result is of paramount importance in archaeological studies as it means that, in the case of $\delta^{18}O_p$ values of sedentary populations, the use of one bone as representative of the whole skeleton is justified.

The $\delta^{18}O_p$ of bones from Gauls and associated animals record the $\delta^{18}O$ value of drinking 505 506 water, which illustrates the climatic conditions prevailing in Picardie, France. The 507 reconstructed air temperatures are 10.2°C±1.4°C and 10.5°C±1.7°C depending on the selected $\delta^{18}O_{mw}$ -MAT equation. Here, we emphasize that those estimated mean air temperatures are 508 similar to present-day ones. Mild air temperatures recorded in Picardie, France, during the 509 510 beginning of the RWP is a new result that needs to be taken into consideration for 511 understanding the climatic regime of the RWP in Europe. This study also shows that 512 archaeological artefacts may provide quantified climatic anchor points with a high spatial and 513 temporal resolution, playing a key role in our knowledge of the Late Holocene short-term 514 climatic changes.

515

516 **Declaration of competing interest**

517	
518	The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal
519	relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.
520	
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522	
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526	
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- 874

875 **Tables**

- 876
- 877 <u>Table 1:</u> Grave, nature, identification and corresponding dates (at 95.4% certainty) inferred
 878 from ¹⁴C dating of the samples from Thézy-Glimont. The archaeological data come from Le
 879 Béchennec et al. (2016).
- 880 * corresponds to the three individuals for which various bones were sampled, see Figure 2.

36

§: If there are two or three dates from the same sample, the radiocarbon dates have been
combined before calibration. Such a combination is checked for internal consistency by a
chi-squared test which is performed automatically by the OxCalTM program.

884

885 **Figures**

886

887 <u>Figure 1:</u> (a) Geographic map of France with the location of the Gallic site of Thézy-Glimont, 888 Picardie, France. PM = Prime Meridian. The datum used for latitude and longitude is WGS84. 889 Picture was taken from Google EarthTM. (b) General plan of the archaeological site. 1: Area 890 where the excavated graves are located. 2: Intermediate area. 3: Enclosure with iron furniture 891 and weapons. In gray is represented a trench from World War 1 (1918). The background 892 image was taken from Google MapsTM.

893

894 <u>Figure 2:</u> Sampling points and intra-skeletal $\delta^{18}O_p$ (‰, V-SMOW) variations represented as 895 local deviation from the average $\delta^{18}O_p$ value of bones coming from TG-01, TG-02 and TG-03 896 individuals.

897

898 <u>Figure 3:</u> $\delta^{18}O_p$ (‰, V-SMOW) values of bones (blue squares) and teeth (red triangles) from 899 humans and animals of Thézy-Glimont. Bones and teeth which are aligned vertically 900 correspond to a same individual. Humans, bovids and horses are represented by increasing 901 sample number from left to right.

902

903 <u>Figure 4:</u> Comparison of oxygen isotope fractionation equations between apatite phosphate 904 $(\delta^{18}O_p, \%, V-SMOW)$ and drinking water $(\delta^{18}O_w, \%, V-SMOW)$ proposed by Daux et al.

37

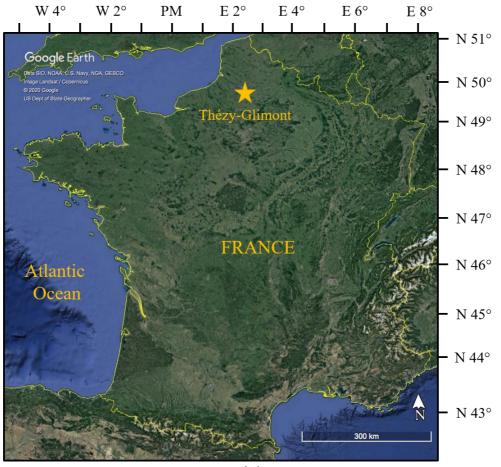
905 (2008) for humans, Longinelli (1984) for pigs, D'Angela and Longinelli (1990) for bovids906 and Bryant et al. (1994) for horses.

907

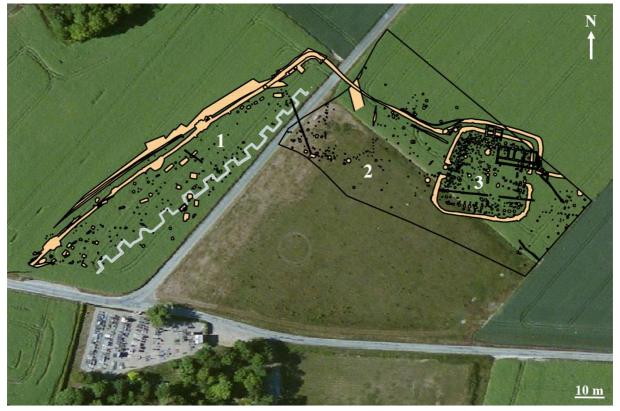
908 <u>Figure 5:</u> $\delta^{18}O_w$ values (‰, V-SMOW) of drinking water inferred from the bones of humans 909 and animals from Thézy-Glimont. Humans and bovids are represented by increasing sample 910 number from left to right. Error bars represent the total uncertainties. The red dashed lines 911 represent the modern $\delta^{18}O_w$ values measured in the Avre river by Négrel and Petelet-Giraud 912 (2005) in April (A) and October (O) 2001.

913

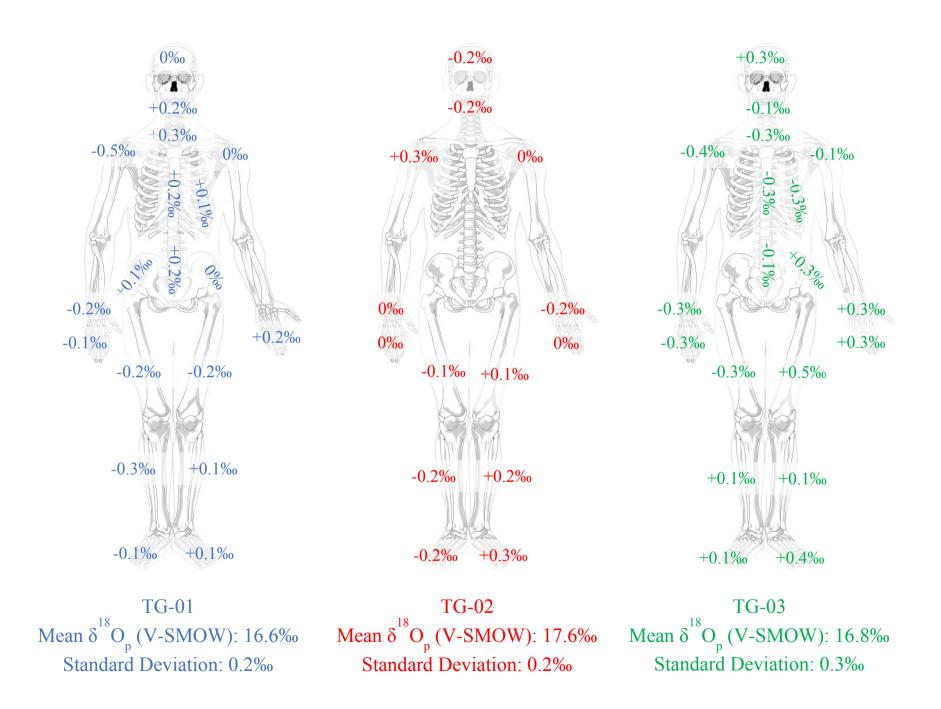
<u>Figure 6:</u> Reconstructed Mean Annual Temperatures (MAT) inferred from the oxygen isotope
composition of drinking water, using the oxygen isotope fractionation equation of von
Grafenstein et al. (1996) (blue squares) and Lécuyer (2013) (red triangles). Humans and
bovids are represented by increasing sample number from left to right. The horizontal dashed
line corresponds to the modern yearly MAT in Picardie, France, averaged throughout the
years 1980 to 2010 (data from Météo FranceTM).

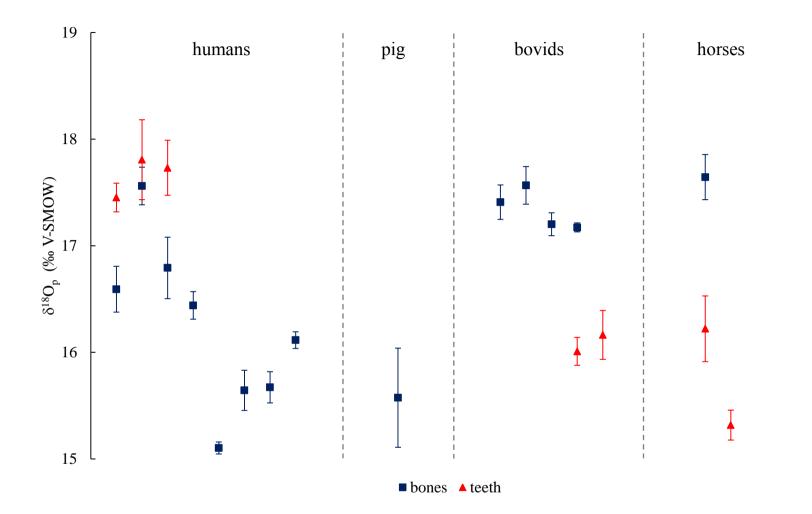


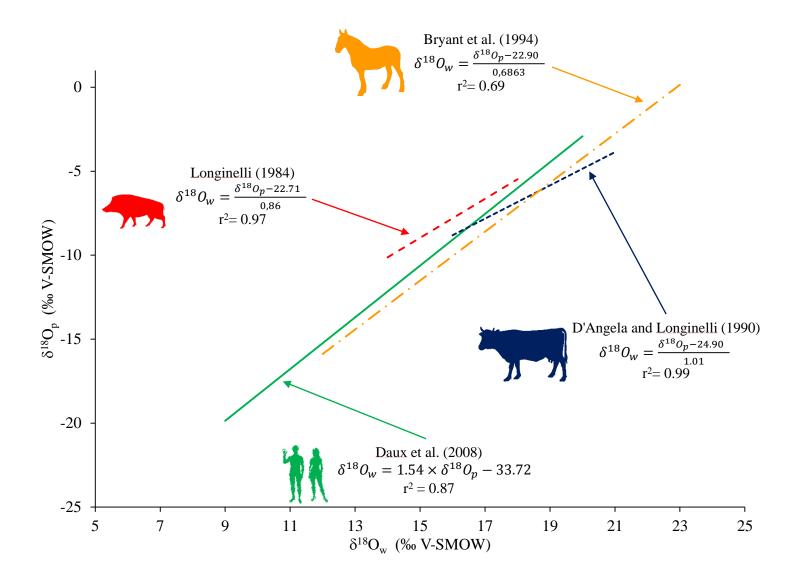
(a)

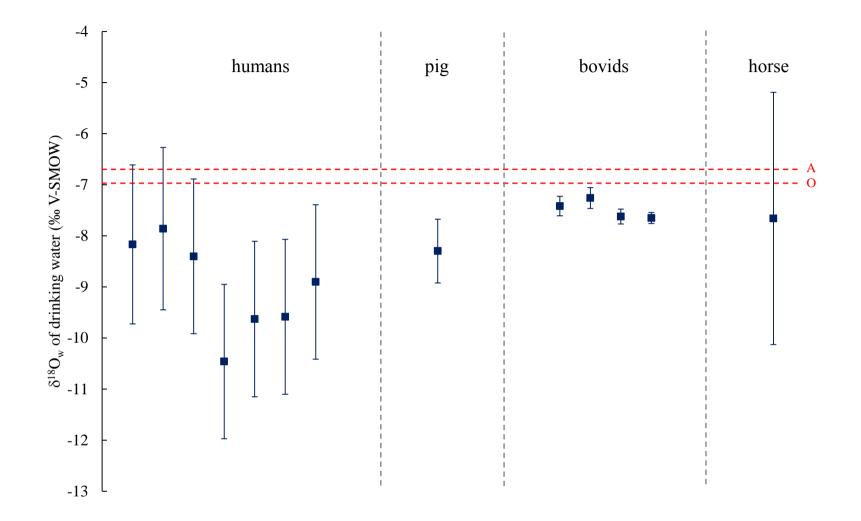


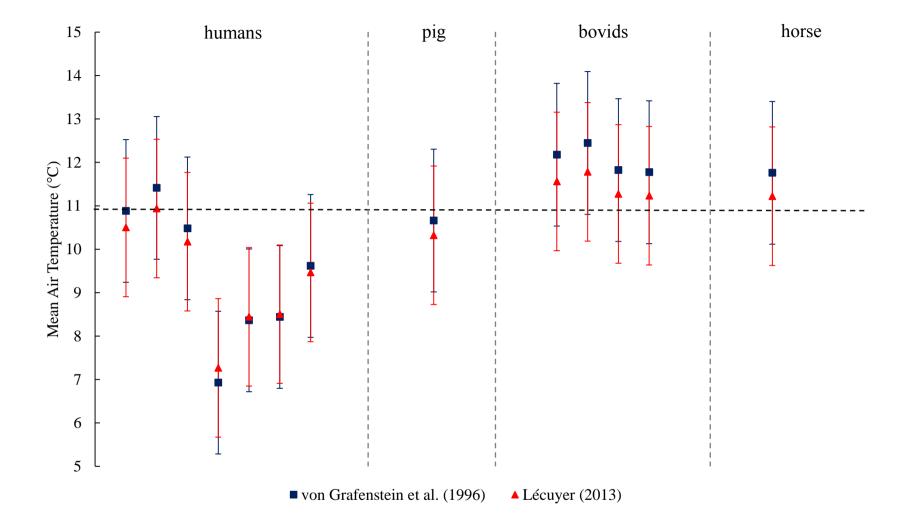
(b)











Grave	Individual	Туре	Sex	Age (years)	Sample type	¹⁴ C dates (BP)	Calibrated dates - $2\sigma (95.4\%)^{\$}$
TGV 1135	TG-01	Homo sapiens	Male	< 30	*	2160 ± 30 2190 ± 30	358 cal BCE (56.7%) 280 cal BCE 258 cal BCE (2.6%) 243 cal BCE 236 cal BCE (36.1%) 170 cal BCE
					1st premolar (PM1)	-	-
					1st molar (M1)	-	-
					2 nd molar (M2)	-	-
	TG-CH1	Equus caballus	Male	3	Left phalanx	2130 ± 30	350 cal BCE (10.5%) 308 cal BCE 210 cal BCE (84.9%) 52 cal BCE
					3rd molar (M3)	2150 ± 30 2180 ± 30 2190 ± 30	356 cal BCE (59.0%) 286 cal BCE 234 cal BCE (36.4%) 170 cal BCE
	TG-B1	Bos taurus	Female	4	Right phalanx	-	-
	TG-B2	Bos taurus	Male	young	Left talus	-	-
	TG-B3	Bos taurus	Male	2	Left phalanx	-	-
	TG-B4	Bos taurus	Male	4	Left phalanx	-	-
					3rd molar (M3)	$\begin{array}{c} 2170\pm30\\ 2205\pm30\end{array}$	359 cal BCE (59.2%) 274 cal BCE 261 cal BCE (36.2%) 184 cal BCE
	TG-CO1	Sus scrofa	Male	-	Right Radius	-	-
					Rib	-	-
					Vertebra	-	-

TGV 1249	TG-02	Homo sapiens	Male	15	*	$\begin{array}{c} 2200\pm30\\ 2170\pm30\end{array}$	358 cal BCE (59.2%) 276 cal BCE 260 cal BCE (36.2%) 180 cal BCE
					1st premolar (PM1)	-	-
					1st molar (M1)	-	-
					3rd molar (M3)	-	-
TGV 1450	TG-03	Homo sapiens	Male	Adult	*	2185 ± 30	361 cal BCE (95.4%) 172 cal BCE
					1st premolar (PM1)	-	-
					2nd molar (M2)	-	-
					3rd molar (M3)	-	-
TGV 1219	TG-04	Homo sapiens	Male	Adult	Right femur	2195 ± 30 2175 ± 30	358 cal BCE (59.0%) 276 cal BCE 260 cal BCE (36.4%) 180 cal BCE
TGV 1138	TG-05	Homo sapiens	Male	30 to 59	Right femur	2180 ± 30 2145 ± 30	356 cal BCE (46.7%) 284 cal BCE 256 cal BCE (0.5%) 250 cal BCE 235 cal BCE (46.0%) 156 cal BCE 134 cal BCE (2.1%) 116 cal BCE
	TG-CH2	Equus caballus	Male	5	Molar	$\begin{array}{c} 2120\pm30\\ 2135\pm30\end{array}$	344 cal BCE (4.3%) 322 cal BCE 206 cal BCE (87.9%) 88 cal BCE 76 cal BCE (3.2%) 58 cal BCE
TGV 1140	TG-06	Homo sapiens	Male	Adult	Right femur	2170 ± 30 2145 ± 30	355 cal BCE (40.5%) 289 cal BCE 232 cal BCE (51.0%) 151 cal BCE 136 cal BCE (3.9%) 114 cal BCE
TGV1206	TG-07	Homo sapiens	Male	Adult	Right femur	2200 ± 30 2225 ± 30	364 cal BCE (95.4%) 203 cal BCE
TGV 1246	TG-08	Homo sapiens	Male	Adult	Tibia	-	-

						2135 ± 30	346 cal BCE (8.2%) 320 cal BCE
TGV 1222	TG-B5	Bos taurus	Male	2 to 3	3rd molar	2160 ± 30	206 cal BCE (87.2%) 520 cal BCE
						2115 ± 30	200 cai BCE (87.2%) 102 cai BCE